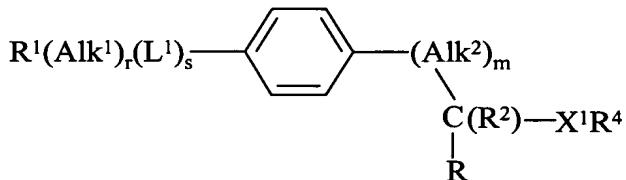


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A compound of formula (1a):



wherein:

R is a carboxylic acid;

R^1 is an optionally substituted pyridyl group;

Alk^1 is an optionally substituted C_{1-6} aliphatic chain or an optionally substituted C_{1-6} heteroaliphatic chain containing one, two, three or four heteroatoms or heteroatom-containing groups chain selected from $-\text{L}^2\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{L}^2\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_2-$, $-(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{L}^2\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_3-$, and $-(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{L}^2(\text{CH}_2)_2$, where L^2 is selected from the group consisting of $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{S})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CO}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CS}-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SON}(\text{R}^5)-$, and $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SO}_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$;

R^5 is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group;

L^1 is $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{S})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CO}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CS}-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CON}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{CSN}(\text{R}^5)-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SON}(\text{R}^5)-$, or $-\text{N}(\text{R}^5)\text{SO}_2\text{N}(\text{R}^5)-$;

r and s , which may be the same or different, is each zero or an integer 1;

Alk^2 is a straight or branched alkylene chain;

m is zero or an integer 1;

R² is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group;

X¹ is a group selected from -N(R³)CO-, (where R³ is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group); -N(R³)SO₂-, -N(R³)C(O)O- or -N(R³)CON(R^{3a})- (where R^{3a} is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group);

R⁴ is an optionally substituted C₁₋₆aliphatic, C₃₋₁₀cycloalkyl, C₃₋₁₀cycloalkenyl, C₇₋₁₀bicycloalkyl, C₇₋₁₀tricycloalkyl, C₇₋₁₀bicycloalkenyl, or C₇₋₁₀tricycloalkenyl group;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and or N-oxides thereof.

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (canceled)

5. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein -(Alk¹)(L¹)_s- is a -CH₂O- or -CON(R⁵)- group where R⁵ is a hydrogen atom or a straight or branched alkyl group.

6. (original) A compound according to Claim 5 wherein -(Alk¹)_r(L¹)_s- is a -CONH-group.

7. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein Alk² is -CH₂-, m is an integer 1, and R² is a hydrogen atom.

8. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein X¹ is a -NHCO-, -NHSO₂-, -NHC(O)O- or -NHCONH- group.

9. (original) A compound according to Claim 8 wherein X¹ is a -NHCO- group.

10. (original) A compound according to Claim 1 wherein R⁴ is an optionally substituted straight or branched C₁₋₆alkyl group or an optionally substituted C₃₋₇cycloalkyl or C₇₋₁₀tricycloalkyl group.

11. (original) A compound according to Claim 10 wherein R⁴ is an optionally substituted straight or branched C₁₋₄alkyl, cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl or adamantyl group.

12. (currently amended) A compound which is:

N-Isopropaloyl-*N*-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

N-Cyclopropaloyl-*N*-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

N-Acetyl-*N'*-(3,5-dichloroisonicotinoyl)-*L*-4-aminophenylalanine;

and the salts, solvates, hydrates and or N-oxides thereof.

13. (original) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to Claim 1 together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, excipients or diluents.

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

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17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)